



Ebrington Primary & Nursery School

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Principal: Mr B F Guthrie, BA Hons ED PQH

15 October 2020

Dear Parent

Ref: School half term closure 19 October-2 November

It is with mixed feelings that I provide this information, following the announcement from the NI Assembly on Wednesday 14 October that schools will close for an 'extended half-term' from Monday 19 October, re-opening Monday 2 November.

I feel the whole province has been waiting for news of a circuit breaker and, in school, we were prepared for the normal half term week being supplemented with a 2-week block of online learning provision wrapped around it in some form.

School has worked extremely hard in managing the challenge that is Covid-19. We have ensured lots of safety protocols have been in place and managed, we have enhanced cleaning procedures, we have resourced sanitising equipment, we have managed large numbers of staff absence, we have managed online work for individual self-isolating pupils, we have provided online work for self-isolating classroom bubbles and we have worked with PHA in identifying risk.

With regards school closure and key workers' children, the First Minister announced that 'because it's such a short closure, it's not actually a closure at all, just a lengthening of the holidays and that teachers won't be in school during that period of time'. This will mean that, unlike during lockdown, where we provided childcare for those key worker families, DE have not put any arrangements in place for this at this time.

In preparing for the next half term, we are sending home any school bags or pencil cases (and other items) that pupils may currently have in school. This will give the opportunity to have a 'wash and a wipe', and also to re-stock pencil cases that may be running low on supplies. Some classes may also be sending home some paper documents such as spellings & mental maths booklets that would be used as homework activities for our return in November.

Cont/d

If there is a need to extend this break from school, we will be fully operational with SeeSaw (Nursery-P4), Google Classroom (P5-P7) and WhatsApp (Speech & Language). Again, if this is the case, could I reiterate the need to be respectful to the teacher's working day and to remember that if schools did remain closed and staff working from home, some of the Ebrington teachers will have young children of school age or pre-school age who will need their support, while they also engage with their class online platform.

Lastly, can I thank you all for your excellent support so far this term. It has certainly been the most challenging term so far in my 20+ years of working in schools. All the members of Team Ebrington have really pulled together and it has been fantastic to see our school values demonstrated in the daily practice and routines of current school life. I am extremely proud to be principal of this school and thank each and every one of our super pupils for being great ambassadors of Ebrington PS & NU.

I trust every member of our school community acts the way that is needed over the coming weeks so that we play our part in reducing the 'R' number. I look forward to welcoming everyone back to school on Monday 2 November.

Take care

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'B Guthrie'.

Mr B Guthrie